(d) by when the said connection will be given?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF "COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO): (a)Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) It is technically not feasible as the distance involved from Tinsukia Telex Exchange is about 35 Kms.

(d) It is likely to be provided in 1991 when the proposed UHF System is installed.

Higher phone rentals

503. SHRI K.V. THANGKABALU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the phone rentals in India are the highest in the world;

(b) whether such steep rental charges are making the telephone beyond the reach of middle classes and retired people;

(c) what steps are proposed to bring the phones within the reach of the middle classes and the retired people; and

(d) what are the reasons for steadily increasing the rentals and ball charges whereas the technology has made it possible to reduce the charges world-wide?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO): (a) Telephone charges in India are not the highest in the World. The charges for various telecommunication services are higher in a number of countries as compared to those in India.

(b) The tariff for various telecom, facilities has been fixed such that the increase in telephone tariff is below the increase in the wholesale price index.

Even after the increases in tariff from December, 1986 and April 1988 demand from public for Telephone has continued to increase from 44.3 lakhs in Nov., 1986 to 50.6 lakhs by April, 1988 and to 53.3 lakhs by September, 1988.

(c) The policy of the Deptt. has been to increase the number of public telephones so that they are accessible to a larger section of people.

(d) The increase in tariff became necessary primarily to meet the rising operational and maintenance cost of the telephone system and to raise resources for development outlays and introduction of new technologies. The rental has been revised from 1.4.1988 after a lapse of 6 years. While increasing the call charges from December, 1986, the 'limit of free calls admissible in a bimonthly period has been increased from 200 to 275.

Rates of STD calls

504. SHRI **K.V.** THANGKABALU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the reasons for the delay in reducing the charges for STD calls during night time;

(b) whether the proposal mooted earlier has been abandoned;

(c) whether it is a fact that in all foreign countries different rates are charged for different hours for STD calls; and

(d) if so, what are the reasons for the inability of Government to effect such positive changes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO): (a) Technical arrangements have to be made in all the Trunk Auto exchanges and some of the.telephone exchanges also for effecting any change in tariff.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Reduced tariff during night time is already available. Between 7 P.M. and 8